



Press Release

The Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation will hold a public meeting to seek information helpful in restoring the water quality of Garden Creek.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announce the start of a study to restore water quality, and a public meeting for open discussion. This meeting will allow the public to offer comments and suggestions relating to the water quality study on Garden Creek. The meeting will be held on November 9, 2006 in Twin Valley Elementary & Middle School, on Route 460 in Oakwood, Virginia. Discussion will take place from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

DEQ is working to identify pollutants affecting the aquatic organisms and sources of bacteria contamination in the waters of Garden Creek that flows into Levisa Fork at Oakwood in Buchanan County, Virginia. The lower 1.78 miles of Garden Creek, from the Right Fork confluence downstream to Levisa Fork is impaired for both aquatic life use and for the recreational use due to bacteria violations.

The pollutant that exceeds the safe standard for recreational use is fecal coliform bacteria. Coliform bacteria are tiny single-celled organisms that can be seen under a microscope. They live in the intestines of people as well as other warm-blooded animals such as livestock, dogs, cats and birds. These bacteria pass through warm-blooded animals in feces or excrement. Where there are coliform bacteria other pathogens may also be present. These pathogens may cause stomach cramps, nausea, ear infections and other illnesses. The higher the concentration of coliform bacteria in creeks, the more likely the other pathogens are present. Measuring fecal coliform and e.coli bacteria concentrations in the stream is a way to learn whether other harmful pathogens are present.

During the study, DEQ will determine the pollutants impairing the aquatic community of Garden Creek and develop total maximum daily loads, or TMDLs, for the impaired waters. A TMDL is the total amount of a pollutant a water body can contain and still meet water quality standards. DEQ will also determine the sources of bacteria contamination and develop a TMDL for bacteria. To restore water quality, contamination levels have to be reduced to the TMDL amount.

The purpose of this public meeting is to obtain information that will help determine how to clean up the waters of Garden Creek can be restored. DEQ requests the public to

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attend this informational meeting and encourages comments and information that will be helpful in restoring the water quality in our community.

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